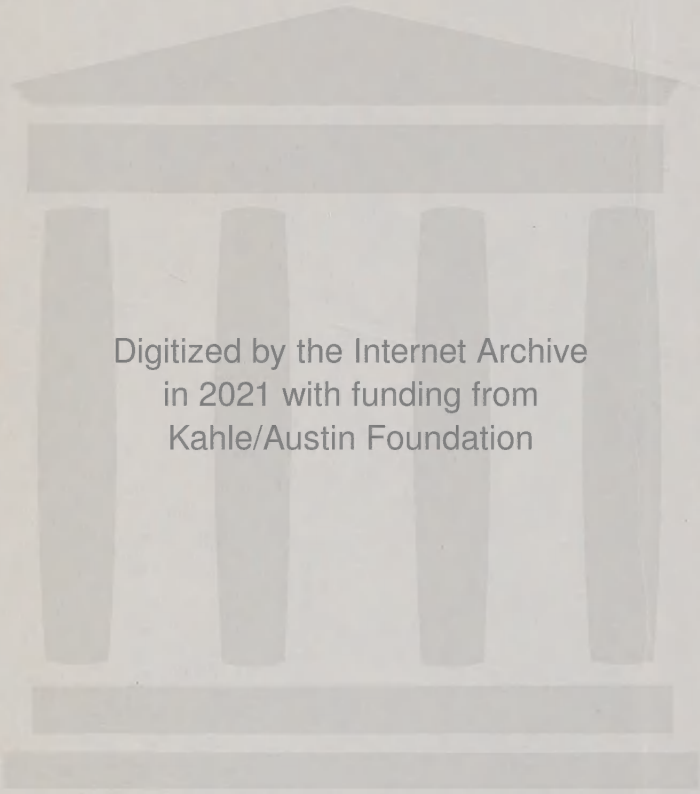


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# THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION

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## THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION

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Four and twenty years ago, at the close of my first year as a professor in Garrett Biblical Institute, I made my inaugural address, which took the place of the Baccalaureate sermon of that year. My department was that of the Hebrew Language and Literature, and I chose for my theme on that occasion, THE HEBREW REVELATION. Some fourteen years ago I was transferred, at my own request, to the chair of Christian Doctrine, and to-day my theme is THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION. My work in the Old Testament was a labor of love, but it begat in me a desire to put the strength of my riper years into an exposition of the New Testament revelation of our Lord. In my inaugural I magnified the literary treasures of the Old Testament; I pointed out its great historical value, and its unique revelation of the mysteries of God. To-day I would not change those former utterances, but would reaffirm them with even stronger emphasis. But I have a greater theme for this hour. The glory of the old covenant, with its tables of stone, its vested priests and its oracles of prophecy, was destined, like the splendor that shone on Moses' face, to pass away before the superior light and liberty of the sons of God, who behold his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

### I. THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

"All the prophets and the law," said Jesus, "prophesied until John the Baptist." No one among them all was greater than John, but our Lord declared that he who is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than that greatest of all the prophets. "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets," said Jesus; "I am come rather to fulfill them." This word *fulfill* has both an active and a passive signification. A fulfillment may be conceived as that which actively fills and keeps



full, and also as that which is or has been filled up. Our Lord fulfilled the law and the prophets in both these ways. He completed in a fullness of grace and glory many a truth which Old Testament writers had but dimly outlined. He proved himself greater than Moses, greater than Solomon, greater than all the prophets. He openly set aside Mosaic laws, and he rebuked the spirit of Elijah when it showed itself in the disciples who would fain call down fire from heaven on those whom they deemed enemies.

In the light of Jesus' teaching much of the Old Testament falls into desuetude, and ceases to be a moral standard for the Christian life. We now perceive that large portions of the Hebrew Scriptures represent a lower stage of civilization, and also a preparatory and imperfect cult, adapted to the hardness of the people's hearts. However unpleasant the fact, it is simply matter of record that "father Abraham" showed at times a lack of truth and veracity which was rebuked by Pharaoh the Egyptian, and by Abimelech the Philistine. Abraham acknowledged Melchizedek to be greater than himself, and Moses deferred to the counsels of Jethro the Midianite. The polygamy of the patriarchs and the divorce laws of Moses sink into moral darkness before the ethical teaching of Jesus. The cruel separation of husbands and wives, as told in the last chapter of the book of Ezra, could obtain no sanction in any Christian commonwealth to-day. We shudder at the slaughter of the Jews' enemies as told with an obvious relish in the book of Esther, and we cannot admire the womanly feelings of Queen Esther when she requests her lord to continue the massacre for another day. The barbarous cutting off of the thumbs and toes of Adoni-bezek, and the "hewing of Agag in pieces before the Lord" call for no apology from us in these days other than we should offer for similar atrocities among the ancient Moabites, or the American Indians. The vindictive psalms are abhorrent to the Christian spirit, but they are in good keeping along with the law of "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, foot for foot."

It is no defect, but rather a merit of the Hebrew Scriptures that they so faithfully report to us the laws and the spirit of their times. The truthful record enables us to point out the defective elements of the ancient moral and religious cults.



We should not allow the spots on the sun of Old Testament revelation to hide its perpetual warmth and worth. These ancient writings are still "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness." But they must be searched in the light of the fuller revelations of God in Christ. And it is noteworthy that our Lord has given us no set of rules by which we may go through the Hebrew Scriptures and mark off the texts which have been fulfilled, and those which are yet binding. His revelations are above such a bondage of the letter. Every jot and tittle seem rather to have been exalted and fused into the new life of his blessed gospel. He would not patch the new cloth upon an old garment. He says, rather, "Behold, I make all things new." In the fullness of his superior revelation every disciple, who is well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, perceives that not Moses only, but also Samuel, and David, and Daniel, and Jonah, wrote of the Christ who was to come. For, as Paul somewhere puts it, "if the ministration engraven on stones came with glory, how shall not rather the ministration of the Spirit be with glory, the glory that surpasseth, transforming the beholder into the same heavenly image, from glory to glory?"

## II. THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION IS ALSO A FULFILLMENT OF ALL THE OTHER RELIGIOUS CULTS OF MANKIND.

More than sixty years ago Richard Chenevix Trench delivered his famous Hulsean lectures, entitled "Christ the Desire of all Nations, or the unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom." He pointed out the ideas of incarnation and of revelation found in many a heathen practice; he noticed the widespread yearning for some great teacher sent from God; also the almost universal custom of offering sacrifices for the purpose of getting on good terms with God. During the last fifty years this comparative study of the religions of mankind has become a science, and has quite revolutionized some former notions of the origin and growth of religion. The Jewish scribes seemed to think that because they had Abraham for their father, they had a monopoly of the grace of God, and they looked with cold contempt upon the outside world. Their sacred books were hedged about with vain traditions, and treated with an almost fetish worship. They

lost the vision of their ancient seers who spoke of a coming Prince of peace in whom all nations should be blessed. This leaven of Jewish narrowness worked over into the Christian Church, and some of the apostles even took offense when they first heard of a mission to the Gentiles. This old leaven of the Pharisees is working in certain parts of Christendom even to this day, so that some would stoutly deny the proposition that Christianity can be in any sense the fulfillment of any heathen cult. They are slow to believe, what Paul so deeply learned, that God left not himself without witness among the nations, but has, since the creation of the world, been revealing his eternal power and divinity to all men. Though the Gentiles have not Moses and the prophets, Paul declares that they "show the work of the law written in their hearts." The recent discovery of the Code of Hammurabi shows that most of the ten commandments and many other laws of the Pentateuch were in force in Babylon a thousand years before the days of Moses. Other ancient law-givers—as Manu of India, and Minos of Crete, and Lycurgus, and Solon, and Numa Pompilius—also claimed to have received their laws from the God of light and wisdom. Even the low-minded fetish-worshiper is feeling after God, if haply he may find him in any visible object that has stirred within him a sense of the supernatural. The totem-pole is as sacred to its clan as was the ark of Jehovah to the ancient Hebrew. Wherever rational human life has appeared on earth, there also the religious feeling has appeared, and that feeling is a yearning after a fuller revelation of God. If now we believe that God works *anywhere* in human life and history, we should also behold him *everywhere*, and through all time. It is most interesting to study the progress of religious ideas traceable among the peoples who have left us their ancient literatures. We observe a progress of doctrine in the successive books of the Old Testament. The notions of God prevalent in the times of the judges of Israel are superseded by the lofty monotheism of Amos. Jeremiah and Ezekiel admonish the people of their time that they should no longer use the proverb once in vogue: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Similar progress in doctrine appears in other cults. Max Müller, years ago, called attention to the remarkable advance in religious

ideas traceable in the successive periods of the vast literature of Brahmanism, from the time of the oldest Vedic hymns down to the modern systems of Hindu philosophy. Still more striking is the evolution of religious thought among the Greeks. According to Homer (*Od.* iii, 48), "all men are yearning after gods." His deities are an innumerable company, and they are all made in the likeness of men. They quarrel, and deceive each other, and the father of gods and of men sends delusive dreams to mislead men. But some centuries later we discover in the odes of Pindar an effort to purify the old theology of Homer. Later still the great tragedians exhibit a more marked advance in their allusions to the gods, and Euripides even questions the existence of such deities as Homer sang. The later Greek philosophers set at naught the polytheism of the poets. In the tenth book of Plato's *Republic* we read: "There is an ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry. Poetry, being such as she is, must not be pursued in earnest, or regarded seriously, as attaining to the truth." These words are very significant and suggestive. The gods of Homer's poems, jealous, deceitful, plotting mischief to mankind, could have no authority over Plato's reason. He could not accept the traditional theology which extolled the ancient myths of gods and goddesses and insisted on their historicity. Socrates, the noblest of the Greeks, was put to death because he did not seem to respect the gods of Athens as the city respected them. Like a later prophet and apostle he seemed to the men of Athens "to be a setter forth of strange gods." The plain fact was that he had broken with the old polytheism of the poets. His philosophy inquired after *reality*, and would not accept the *fictions of poetry* as a substitute for facts. He did not attain unto clear revelations of God, nor did Plato; but who put it in Plato's mind to write such words as these? "The Creator of the world generated and created this universe. He was good, and no goodness can ever have jealousy. He desired that all things should be like himself as possible. He put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, and he framed the universe to be the best and fairest work in the order of nature. And therefore, using the language of probability, we may say that the world became a living soul, and truly rational through the providence of God" (*Tim.* 30).



Those noble spirits among the Gentiles who thus felt after God were not very far from the kingdom of heaven. God was as truly, if not as clearly, in them as he was in Samuel and in Jeremiah. The truth they grasped was part and parcel of that "true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The Greeks advanced beyond many other races, and the Jewish people were favored above all in that theirs were "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the promises." But Jew and Gentile alike needed a fuller revelation of God; and in the fullness of time Israel was cast off and scattered abroad, and the Christian revelation is now offered to all the nations.

III. THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION SURPASSES ALL THAT IS  
NOBLEST IN OTHER RELIGIONS, AND OFFERS THE BEST  
CLAIMS TO BECOME THE ULTIMATE UNIVERSAL  
RELIGION OF MANKIND.

We confidently utter this proposition with our eyes open to the fact that "historical Christianity" has its deplorable records of lordly churchism, and priestly corruption, and Spanish inquisition, and Protestant bigotry, and both Romish and Protestant conflict with scientific research, and a dread of liberty of thought. Some of the famous Christian theologians have propounded horrible dogmas that Jesus would have spurned. We cannot ignore the offenses that have accompanied the outgoings of Christianity in the world. They must needs have come, and they have their explanation in the frailty and fallibility of man. Corresponding offenses have also appeared in connection with every other cult. But we claim and insist that *every form of religion is entitled to be judged by what is highest and best in its fundamental teaching*. We should study all religions with a sympathetic feeling, for we may see in every one of them the noblest elements of human nature yearning after God. Thoughtful men are now asking, What is religion? What is the essence of Christianity? And we are told that, in the deepest sense, religion is the recognition of a divine relation between God and man. This being true, then that religion which best exhibits the facts and the significance of such relationship should have the highest claims upon us all. Accordingly, we ask of Chris-

tianity and its preachers, as we would of any other cult, what is the best you can tell us about man and about God?

1. First of all, let us examine *what the Christian Revelation has to tell us about man's dutiful relations to his fellow man*. We will appreciate the teaching of Jesus on this subject the better by duly studying what other great teachers have had to say. We do not disparage the light given to such masters as Confucius, and Laotse, and Socrates, by holding the opinion that Jesus Christ was far in advance of them all. We devoutly thank God for whatever light and truth he gave those ancient masters. Confucius expressed the golden rule on this wise: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do unto others." Socrates put it this way: "Let no one touch what is mine, nor disturb the least thing which belongs to me without my consent; and may I, being of well disposed mind, act in the same manner in regard to the things of others" (*Laws*, 913). Socrates also condemned the law of retaliation, and said, "It is wrong to render evil for evil to anyone, whatever we may have suffered from him" (*Crito*, 49). And Laotse, the old Chinese philosopher, contemporary with Confucius, anticipated both Socrates and Jesus with the noble precept, "Return good for evil." But Confucius would not accept this teaching of Laotse. No, no; he said, "Return good for good, but recompense injury with justice." All these sayings may, in their way, be called "holy, and just, and good," as Paul said of the law. They were written on the hearts of those great Gentiles by the finger of God. Jesus' superiority appears not only in his giving distinctive and positive expression to these golden maxims, but also in his declaring their fundamental character. Observe his manner of statement: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even do ye also unto them." When asked to name the great commandment, he first cited from Deuteronomy—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and called this "the first and great commandment." Then he immediately cited from Leviticus—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and declared that on these two commandments the entire law and the prophets hang. When, now, we turn to this law as it is written in Leviticus, we observe that it there stands in connection with these words: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart;

thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against *the children of thy people.*" With the Jew this commandment had no application to his conduct with the heathen round about him. No Gentile was his brother, or his neighbor. Jesus exposed the defects of the old law by showing that its current meaning with the Jew was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy." Then, rising far above such narrow concepts, he proclaimed: "I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father in heaven: for he gives sunshine and rain to the evil and the good, to the just and the unjust." When the lawyer asked him, "Who is my neighbor?" he uttered the parable of the good Samaritan. It is a touching tribute to the humanity of Jesus that the Samaritan priests at Shechem to this day speak with affection of the fact that Jesus himself was once called a Samaritan by his Jewish enemies, and that he gave as an illustration of neighborly love the example of the good Samaritan.

But our wonder deepens when we hear this man of Nazareth proclaim: "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." In the synagogue he reads Isaiah's language as his own: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor, liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind." He takes up the little children in his arms, and blesses them, and says, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." He weeps beside the grave of Lazarus. He loves the mountains, and the fields, and the grass, and the lilies and the birds. The plowman, and the sower, and the shepherd are his familiars. His sermons on the mount, and in the plain, and in the upper room surpass the oracles of Sinai. What a heavenly decalogue are his beatitudes! What heavenly ethics in a command like this: "If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." What hundreds of wretched quarrels and lawsuits might be avoided by observing this Christly rule! But the current spiteful ethics of the worldling says, "No, no; that man first sinned against me, and when he comes and asks my pardon, it will be time enough for me to forgive him." Peter evidently thought himself very charitable when he asked the Master, "Shall I forgive my offend-



ing brother seven times?" But the Lord answered, "Nay, rather until seventy times seven."

Our wonder still deepens when we further observe how even *the ten commandments* are *exalted* into a higher significance by the teachings of Jesus. The young ruler, who said he had kept all these commandments from his childhood, went away sorrowful on finding that the very first commandment meant for him more than he was ready to obey. The blind Pharisee, who esteemed above temple and altar the gold of the temple and the gift on the altar, was seen to be worse than one who makes unto himself a graven image. The third commandment is superseded by "swear not at all." How withering the rebuke which exposed the Pharisaic dishonor of father and mother by withholding their dues in order to offer pretentious gifts to God. And "every one who is angry with his brother" is shown to be a murderer like Cain. The crime of adultery may be committed by the lustful look, and theft and falsehood may work their foul pollution in the soul of man without the overt act; for "out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, thefts, false witness and railings." And so at the touch of Jesus every one of the old commandments flames with a new light and power. Every jot and tittle is filled up with a deeper meaning. Nothing is left exactly as it was, but every precept takes on a higher type of law—"the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

There was a time, at a great crisis in our nation, when perhaps half the people in the United States jeered at William H. Seward's solemn appeal to "a higher law." Perhaps the same proportion would to-day treat with like disdain our Lord's teaching on the question of divorce. "Is it ever lawful," they asked him, "for a man to put away his wife?" No, never, was his answer; an answer which has been mischievously perverted by the Judaizing interpolation in Matthew's Gospel of the clause—"except for the cause of adultery." If Jesus had uttered that notorious exception, it is inexplicable why both Mark and Luke should have failed to report it. Matthew's Gospel betrays also other marks of early Jewish-Christian interpolation, which bear witness to the fact that some of the early disciples could not accept all the teachings of Jesus, but were wont to say of some of them, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" They were

offended at the statement of Jesus that the law of Moses on the subject of divorce was only an easy-going regulation, adjusted to the hardness of the people's hearts. Heaven's first law of man and wife, he told them, was that of monogamy, and what God has thus joined together no man should presume to put asunder. Listen now to Jesus' higher law: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if she herself shall put away her husband and marry another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:11). Here, in this oldest Gospel, no exception is made or suggested for any cause whatever. The same is true of the parallel passage in Luke.

Ah! I hear one saying, "That is too high a law for man. Such total prohibition of divorce is impracticable in the civilized world to-day." Yes, yes, no doubt; such is still the lamentable hardness of human hearts, and the lusts of the flesh are so mighty that our divorce laws flout the teachings of Jesus Christ. Superficial sentimentalists cry out, "What, no divorce laws for any cause whatever! Think of the miserable unions of utterly incompatible natures; would you compel such to live together?" No, I think Jesus would say, I would not compel them to live together. It might be far better for them to live apart, until the death of one of them end the dire tragedy. But let not either of them dare marry again while the other is alive. When this higher law of Christ shall obtain due recognition in human civilization and in an enlightened conscience, then—and not till then—will hasty, wretched marriages and disgusting divorce scandals cease to debauch the public conscience, and shame the Christian world.

Let no one imagine that we make void the law by this exposition of the teachings of Jesus. Rather do we magnify the law, and make it more honorable. We point out the mind of Christ and show the vast superiority of the Christian revelation. Where, in all the past, has there arisen a lawgiver, prophet or teacher fairly comparable to this Man of Nazareth? We take no laurel from another's brow, but we show, beyond a question, that Jesus is supreme.

2. Observe, next, *what the Christian Revelation has to tell us about God*. This is the subject of perpetual inquiry, the mystery of all mysteries. It is the question of the life of the

world. Plato argued that human souls must needs exist in some way before the bodies they inhabit, and, in like manner, before this visible world came into being there must have been the great universal Soul of the world. Earlier still than Plato, Heraclitus of Ephesus, observing that all things are in perpetual motion, maintained that all the forms of nature of which we have any knowledge are evolutions out of an original, eternal fire-mist. All things, he said, are full of souls, and no one, by whatever road he may travel, can ever find out the boundaries of the soul. I confess a sense of awe in the presence of these ancient thinkers. They bear witness to the concept of a universal animism. They seem not very far from those old Hebrew psalmists and prophets who say that God causes the grass to grow, and fills the trees with sap, and waters the hills with his rain, and makes the clouds his chariot, and walks on the wings of the wind. They could sometimes hear the sound of his going in the tops of the mulberry trees.

The modern scientific study of the universe serves to intensify these inquiries after the moving Soul of the world. Our wise men assure us that the sun is more than ninety millions of miles distant from this earth, and yet a ray of light comes all that way to us in eight minutes of time! I am not a little staggered to compute such spaces and such speed. But I am overwhelmed when these same wise men point me to that glorious constellation of the north, which we familiarly call "the Great Dipper," and tell me that a ray of light, going at the rate of ninety millions of miles in eight minutes, requires six years to reach us from those stars! Another class of scientists turns our attention to the equally astonishing universe of infinitesimals. The microscope discloses in one little drop of water a population of living creatures more numerous than the legal voters of Chicago; and if two separate drops are run together what fatal battles follow! Animalcules with long, sharp teeth, and threatening horns, and ugly tusks, rush at each other, seeking whom they may devour. But in all this telescopic and microscopic search no one has yet discovered the Soul of the world. What is it? Wherein is the hiding of its power? Agnostics have called it "the Infinite." But how does that help us? The infinite *What?* we ask. Infinite Bulk, or infinite littleness? We get no answer



in physical heights or depths. There is the little Mayflower, or the "flower in the crannied wall." If we but knew the invisible sources of its inner life, "root and all, and all in all," we should better know what God is and what man is.

What has the Christian Revelation to say about this mystery of the ages? It surely has something to say. What it says is not of the nature of a demonstration. It has not convinced or won the hearts of some thoughtful men. Perhaps, then, I do well to submit it simply as a *hypothesis*. Neither Jesus nor his disciples have claimed all knowledge, or ability to resolve all mysteries. Suppose, then, for the thoughtful doubter, I submit what Jesus has to say about the Soul of the world, not as a revelation, but as a proposition, a hypothesis. A hypothesis has claims on the reason just so far as it may best suffice to answer known facts. We present the Christian concept of God as the best answer ever yet given to the human heart in its quest after the Soul of the world. We are bound in all honesty of thought to accept it until someone shows us a better theory or hypothesis.

To me one of the most profound sayings of Jesus is, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." God, then, is the great eternal Worker, and Jesus Christ is like him. It is noteworthy that Jesus spoke far more frequently about *his Father* than he did about *God*. He teaches us to begin our prayers with "Our Father." He seems to delight in such expressions as "my Father and your Father;" "your heavenly Father;" tell my brethren that I ascend unto my Father and your Father, my God and your God." Hear him pray: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise, and didst reveal them unto babes. . . . No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In John's Gospel these forms of expression are very striking: "He that beholdeth me, beholdeth him that sent me;" "I am in the Father, and the Father in me;" "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

What, now, does this kind of revelation tell us about God? To me it says: Do not expect the telescope or the microscope to give you the real vision of God. Travel not afar in the infinite

spaces of the stars, nor search the atoms of infinitesimal life to find out God. If there is any great, self-conscious "Soul of the world," you will probably best find him in the workings of the self-conscious human soul. *The God*, whom we adore, is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is the supreme "Son of his love," called, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of his substance." And yet he is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hear him call: "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Behold here, then, a prophet, a teacher, a Son of Man and Son of God, sent forth from God to tell us that we are his own kith and kin. In him the pure in heart see God. Look at his purity, and patience, and wisdom, and power over life and death, his suffering and sorrow over the sins of men, and ye behold the Father also. When he weeps at Lazarus' tomb, and when he cries over Jerusalem: "How often would I have gathered thy children together as a mother-bird gathers her brood under her wings"—we behold the Father also, his Father and our Father, his God and our God. The presence and eternal activity of such a Soul of the world in the world is the best hypothesis we have found to account for the facts of the world. To us it has the value of an unspeakably precious revelation.

There are those who seem to think it an improvement on the Lord's prayer to add to the familiar *pater noster* a *mater nostra*, and say, "Our Mother in heaven." If this be in reality anything more than a shallow sentimentalism, or if it affords any devout worshiper a touch of hallowed emotion, we need not be over critical. God who made man in his own image "made them male and female"—perhaps implying that it requires the qualities capable of both fatherhood and motherhood to constitute the complete image of God. In the same ancient chapter of creations we are also told that the Spirit of God was brooding like a mother-bird upon the face of the primeval waters, and at the Word of God the waters swarmed with swarms of living things. Those products of creation are also called "generations of the heavens and the earth." And Jesus assures us that his Father keeps on working, and that he works along with him. The growths of even the vegetable world are male and female, and

bear their witness to God's paternal and maternal glory. And if a refined human affection is wont to think of a mother's love as containing some element more exquisite in any way than a father's tenderness, we only say, "Be of good comfort." The love of God surpasses all that we can know of fond affection. The love of Jonathan for David "was wonderful, passing the love of women;" more wonderful must be "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." The word of the Lord through one of the prophets cried out long ago: "Can a woman forget her nursing child? Yes, they may forget, saith Jehovah, yet never will I forget thee!" "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." And so, when we behold Jesus taking little children in his arms, we see the Father also, his Father and our Father, whose loving-kindness surpasses all that men and women have ever known of holy love. For "God is love," and "love is of God." His love is enhanced in our thought by what Jesus says about the lilies and the birds. "Consider the lilies, how they grow, without toil; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Behold the birds; they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. Nay, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows." Whither must such thoughts lead us on? Every sparrow, every robin, every linnet is beloved by our heavenly Father. The emotion of yonder child over the death of the pet canary is not so deep and genuine as that of God over the same little creature. We can set no bounds to such a heavenly sympathy.

It has become a theological fad in some quarters to talk about the "immanence of God." Can it add anything to this Christly revelation of our heavenly Father's presence in every bird, and leaf, and flower? Our Father worketh continually, in all, over all. He leads forth the Pleiades as easily as he clothes the grass of the field. His universal presence is the real pantheism. He is the everlasting Soul of the world, and we call him "Our Father who is in the heavens." He bringeth forth "the generations of the heavens and the earth," and "he worketh hitherto," and evermore.



But if our Father cares for every sparrow, how much more must he yearn over the perils of every man who is created in his image? His passion of righteousness is as mighty as the passion of his love, and love is in distress when any living soul is in affliction. The sympathetic, suffering Son of God reveals an equally sympathetic heavenly Father. Paul speaks of the whole creation as travailing in pain, and waiting in earnest expectation some great redemption of the sons of God. The eternal Spirit is also making intercession, as one acquainted with grief, and undergoing emotion "with groanings that cannot be uttered." O mystery of love unspeakable! The eternal Father, the loving Soul of the world, must needs feel unspeakable obligation to care for his own offspring. If the whole creation, or any part of it, groans in pain or in sorrow, the Father feels a sympathetic pang. The love of Christ and the sufferings of Christ admonish us how his Father and our Father must feel the holiest obligation to do his uttermost to rescue every wandering child. If one go astray, and sin against God, and feel the bitter sting of death, how is the Father's bosom wrung with a Christly agony? Such a Father and such a Christ cannot be willing that anyone perish, but that every one, and all, be made "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." But, alas, it is not in the power of love or of suffering to *compel* obedience to the truth. The mystery of ages must work its onward course; our Father is working in his own wisdom and love, and we should study to work in harmony with him. Our Christian revelation magnifies the love of God and the love of man. Such a God and Father as Christ reveals is worthy of our holiest affection. No other cult or school of thought presents to us such a magnificent concept of God and of man, and of such Christly relations between them. Kinship with such a Father, and mother, and sister, and brother, as we behold in Jesus Christ, exalts us into the fellowship of the heavenly regions.

Members of the Graduating Class: These doctrines of God and man are fundamental to the message of salvation which you are to preach to your generation. Who can fail with such a Father and such a Christ to lead him on? The spiritual treasures of this revelation are inexhaustible. Have you considered what an inheritance we have in the mere phrases which express the

living experiences of our Gospel? What gems, what pearls of great price, are indicated in such familiar household words as these: "Forgiveness of sin;" "peace with God;" "the righteousness of faith;" "full assurance of faith;" "the witness of the Spirit;" "joy in the Holy Spirit;" "the liberty of the sons of God;" "the beauty of holiness;" "your life is hid with Christ in God." And along with all these comes the assurance of our blessed hope: "Our light affliction which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens."

These things teach, and exhort, and proclaim with all boldness, and with all gentleness. To you it is given to behold as in a mirror the glory of God, and also to be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory. Unto you is committed the word of reconciliation, the blessed ministry of this Christian Revelation.

I charge you, in the sight of God and of Jesus Christ, that you give diligence to show yourselves approved of God. Study to be workmen who need never be ashamed. Handle the Word of truth aright. So shall ye be partakers both of the sufferings of Christ and of the glories that are to follow.

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